



THE CISPUS LEARNING CENTER GROWS TEACHERS!

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PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Improving Instruction, Closing the Gap

The Principals' Learning Centers have grown to be more than a place for fifth-grade outdoor school and summer leadership camps.

Our efforts to serve more and larger audiences have evolved.

Promoting and growing teachers is one aspect of our work. The experience we offer at our residential

learning laboratories have proven to be invaluable. Whether they come to us for a three-month internship or the challenge course, a year-long AmeriCorps adventure, or return to a summer leadership camp week, the time with us is convincing - the education profession is a great career choice. I asked four premier educators to comment on their pathway to teaching. Here are their responses.

Travis recently completed his student teaching in science and is substituting while looking for his first teaching job:



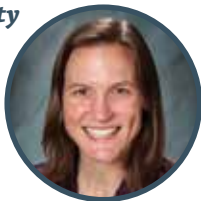
"I first went to Cispus for a leadership camp in high school.

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I knew I would one day become a teacher, but I wasn't planning on entering the profession right away. Mt. Baker Leadership Camp provided me with a leg up in team work and communication skills, and servant leadership. I returned to become a staff member as soon as I could. Summer 2018 will be my sixth year on staff, and I credit the inspiring and motivational group of people at helping myself achieve the goals I have set for myself.

The years of practice facilitating, challenging and mentoring students through my time of service at Cispus prepared me well for the teaching profession; I will receive my teaching certificate this spring. It is hard not to be inspired by the great people on staff who donate their time to help serve the students. After working at Cispus, it is hard to imagine anything other than teaching."

Susan is now deputy superintendent for a Washington state Educational Service District. She came to us years ago wondering if education was right for her:



"While my path to an education career resulted from various experiences, being an intern at Cispus Learning Center encouraged me to pursue the field of education. My experience at Cispus also influenced how I conducted myself as a teacher and administrator, and how I interacted with students, staff, families, and colleagues.

Challenge course initiatives teach and reinforce soft skills and teamwork. Participants are encouraged to set individual and team goals and reflect on their progress throughout initiatives.

Participants experience various leadership roles in a physically safe and emotionally supportive environment.

There are many parallels between being a challenge course facilitator and being an effective teacher and administrator. Being an intern at Cispus gave me exposure to teaching & learning in a non-traditional approach to the field of education."

Sarah is in her second year of teaching Spanish full-time at a high school in Portland. She joined us as an AmeriCorps volunteer in 2013, and spent her time at a local high school:



"My AmeriCorps experience connected me to teaching in a number of ways: (1) the educational experience I got as a tutor and mentor has been invaluable, and given me a major leg up on every job interview since, including the one for my current teaching position; (2) as a teacher candidate and grad student, I felt ahead of my peers because I worked in a school and already knew a lot about how to navigate the public education system (administration, paperwork, graduation requirements, state/national testing, etc.); (3) working at the teen center and the classroom during my year of service gave me confidence working with teens and taking a leadership role; and (4) I am now somewhat 'known' at my high school for being really good at building community among students and staff, mostly using strategies I learned as an AmeriCorps volunteer."

Basically, my experience at Cispus AmeriCorps paved the way for my teaching career and launched me

pretty far ahead of my peers. That boost of initial experience not only helped me get this job, but helped me keep and get better at it. I considered quitting in late October my first year. I was brand new, things were getting really difficult at school, and I really lacked confidence. I think had I not had so much additional experience in education through AmeriCorps, I would not have been in a place to persevere and keep going. The rest of the year went much better after October, and I am really excited to keep teaching!"

Marissa is in her first year as a high school English and leadership teacher:



"I entered my Masters of Education program at the age of 22 feeling ready for my own classroom from the first day. In our initial practicum placement, we were paired with another member of the cohort to shadow a teacher and practice teaching lessons in live settings. My placement partner never stood in front of 30 14-year-olds, and he was nervous and hesitant to take the risk. I found myself thinking, 'If I could stand in front of 250 teenagers I didn't know yet and sing/dance to silly songs about frogs and bananas, then I can teach this lesson to these 30 kids today.' From that moment on, I confidently pursued my passion, and eventually landed my dream job. I credit much of my teaching experience to Cispus because it was there I first became a 'teacher'.

I joined the Mt. Baker Leadership Camp staff after being a delegate twice in high school and since then, I have been on both junior and senior staff for a total of about six years. Since I was 18, I have facilitated discussions

as I practiced asking thought-provoking questions in small group settings. Camp is a place where students learn the importance of reflection and mindfulness as tools to help them discover their own identities. I spent my years on staff learning from a group filled with educators, administrators and people with the natural gift of inspiring the best in others. I am a first-generation college student, but I never felt ill-prepared for my journey because I constantly received love, guidance and support from the staff members who are both my teachers and my friends.

Mt. Baker centers on the values of knowledge, courage and compassion. Those became the guiding principles behind my current teaching philosophy. I know education is more than teaching things to kids. It's about making a difference in someone's life and showing people love and kindness, even if they are different than you. The camp staff models the ideal group of educators that the world needs now more than ever before. I was destined to do this work and I discovered — and continue to rediscover— that at Cispus.”

I am convinced Cispus Learning Center is an ideal incubator for teachers. A sustained experience with us can help the potential teacher decide their future goals. We take all who are interested.

If you know someone who would benefit from spending time with us, point them in our direction. ■

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